

## **Quick Facts About the Novel H1N1 (Swine Flu)**

*AmeriChoice wants to help you understand some important facts about the novel H1N1 Flu so you can help protect yourself and your family. The information below is based on information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).*

### **What is novel H1N1 Flu (swine flu)?**

Novel H1N1 is a new type of flu virus that is affecting people around the world. The virus is spreading from person-to-person in much the same way that regular seasonal flu viruses are spread.

### **How do you catch it?**

Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person by coughing and sneezing. Sometimes people may get it from touching something with the flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.

**Note: You CANNOT get the swine flu from eating pork and pork products.**

### **What are the symptoms?**

Novel H1N1 flu symptoms are similar to seasonal flu symptoms and include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Body aches
- Headache
- Chills
- Tiredness
- Some people also vomit and get diarrhea

Sickness can be mild to severe and has caused death in some cases.

### **How can I protect myself from catching it?**

- Ask your doctor if you should get an H1N1 flu shot.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also helpful.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Stay home if you are sick.

- Follow good health habits: Get enough sleep, exercise, drink lots of water, eat a healthy diet, and manage stress.

### **Will getting a seasonal flu shot protect me from the novel H1N1 flu?**

No, the seasonal flu shot will not protect you from getting the novel H1N1 flu. It is very important that you also get a seasonal flu shot if you are someone for whom the seasonal flu shot is recommended. Check with your doctor if you have any questions.

### **Is there a shot available for the novel H1N1 flu?**

Yes, a shot is expected to be available some time this fall. The following people are considered high priority for receiving the shot when it becomes available:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- All people from 6 months through 24 years of age
- Persons age 25 through 64 who have health conditions associated with higher risk of flu-related medical complications, including asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and pregnancy

Ask your doctor if you should get an H1N1 flu shot.

### **What should I do if I get sick?**

If you get sick, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people. Also call your doctor to see whether flu testing or treatment is needed. If you experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care.

### **In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:**

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms get better but then return with fever and worse cough

### **In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:**

- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion

- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms get better but then return with fever and worse cough

### **How is the novel H1N1 flu treated?**

Most people will recover without needing medical care. If needed, the CDC suggests taking the anti-viral medicines called Tamiflu and Relenza to treat and prevent the swine flu. These medicines work best if taken within two days of showing symptoms of H1N1 flu. See other treatment recommendations in the last question.

**IMPORTANT:** Do **NOT** give aspirin or aspirin-containing medicines (like Pepto Bismol) to any one age 18 or younger. Do **NOT** give children younger than age 4 over-the-counter cold medicines without speaking to a doctor first.

- Check labels on over-the-counter cold and flu medicines to see if they contain aspirin.
- Children age 5 and older and teenagers with the flu can take medicines **without** aspirin, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) and ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®, Nuprin®), to treat symptoms.

***For more information on the novel H1N1 flu, go to [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general\\_info.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/general_info.htm) or <http://www.flu.gov/>***

***If you have any questions, please call your doctor.***

***“Cover It,” Wash ‘Em,” and “Keep ‘em home!” badges are available in Spanish as well. See <http://www.cdc.gov/SocialMedia/Campaigns/H1N1/Buttons.html>***